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*Headline:*

*The California Integrated Waste Management Board recently announced the state has reached an unprecedented 58 percent waste diversion rate by diverting 54 million tons of trash for reuse and recycling.*

California has reached another major environmental milestone by reducing nearly 60 percent of all the waste created in the Golden State.

The State's leading agency on waste diversion and recycling, the California Integrated Waste Management Board, has calculated an unprecedented 58 percent waste diversion for 2007.

This great feat happened at a time when the state's population grew an estimated 1% and over all solid waste increased to 93 million tons.

But true to California form, nearly 54 million tons of that trash never made it to a landfill thanks to increased recycling programs, a stronger infrastructure, and an overall shift in consumer behavior.

That 54 million tons kept out of landfills is like eight Hoover Dams worth of trash.

California now finds higher and better uses for these resources. By diverting all these materials from landfills, California also significantly reduces green house gas emissions and helps promote California's economy.

[Margo Reid Brown quote] "Californians should be very proud of the achievement of reaching 58 percent waste diversion. Not only do we keep those recyclable materials out of our landfills, but we've created a sustainable infrastructure in California that employs 85 thousand Californians, and provides 10 billion dollars worth of goods and services to our State economy."

The environmental impacts of recycling are astounding. Each year recycling saves enough energy to power 1.4 million California homes, and reduces water pollution by 27,000 tons. Recycling also saves 14 million trees and helps to reduce air pollution by 165,000 tons. All of these efforts are working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an amount equal to taking 3.8 million cars off the highway.

The official 58 percent statewide diversion rate surpasses a legislatively imposed mandate and places the state at the forefront of national efforts to reduce and recycle our trash.

The Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 required individual cities and counties to cut their disposal rates in half but left the specifics for doing so largely up to each jurisdiction. In light of their individual needs and available resources, the Board provides sweeping oversight of local waste diversion efforts, as well as technical and financial assistance for programs designed to increase waste diversion.